

Claims

1. A television system for presenting interactive television services to a user, the system platform comprising: a local memory; means for determining availability of data from a data source; means for capturing that data; means for storing a first portion of the available data in a first area of the local memory, said first portion having a specified identity; means for determining whether the first data portion references a second data portion of the available data depending on a value of one or more parameters stored in local memory, the second portion also having a specified identity, and means for storing the second portion in the first area of local memory in the event that a reference between the first and second portions is found, wherein the data captured is usable to provide interactive services for the user.
2. A television system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the local memory includes volatile and non-volatile memory.
3. A system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the first and second memory areas are volatile memory.
4. A system as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the volatile memory is DRAM.
5. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the first and/or second areas of memory are provided in a hard drive.
6. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims further comprising means for processing the first and second portions of data based on steps wholly or partially proscribed in code contained within a downloaded data object, wherein the processed data is stored in a second part of the local memory for use in presenting said interactive services.

7. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims, the system being operable to perform the capturing/downloading of data while the system is not presenting services to a user.
8. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein the data source is a broadcast television network and/or the internet.
9. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims that is operable to determine whether data that is scheduled to be transmitted from the data source is more recent/up-to-date than the data in the local memory and prevent or omit a scheduled download in the event that data from said source is determined not to be more recent/up-to-date than the data in local memory.
10. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein one or more portions of the system are powered up immediately prior to receipt of data from the data source and powered down upon receipt of said data.
11. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein a portion of the data captured from the data source comprises a service entitlement or disentanglement message addressed to the platform.
12. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein the presented interactive service comprises an electronic programme guide or an on screen television magazine.
13. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein the presented interactive service comprises an interactive game.
14. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein the presented interactive service comprises playback of a stored video or audio clip, or a video or audio stream.

15. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims comprising a set-top-box or television or video-recorder, cordless or mobile telephone, media jukebox, personal digital assistant, mobile phone or combinations thereof.
16. A system as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein
17. A method for presenting interactive television services to a user of a television system, the method comprising determining availability of data from a data source; capturing at least some of the available data; storing a first portion of the available data in a first area of a local memory, said first portion having a specified identity; determining whether the first data portion references a second portion of the available data depending on a value of one or more parameters stored in the local memory, the second portion also having a specified identity; storing the second portion in the first area of local memory in the event that a reference between the first and second portions is found; processing the first and second portions of data according to their identities; writing the processed data to a second area of the local memory, and using the processed data to present interactive television services to the user.
18. A method as claimed in claim 17 wherein the local memory includes volatile and non-volatile memory.
19. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein the first and second memory areas are volatile memory.
20. A method as claimed in claim 18 or claim 19 wherein the volatile memory is DRAM.
21. A method as claimed in any of claims 17 to 20 wherein the step of processing the data is done based on steps wholly or partially proscribed in code contained within a downloaded data object.
22. A method as claimed in any of claims 17 to 21 comprising capturing/downloading data while the system is not presenting services to a user.

23. A method as claimed in any of claims 17 to 22 wherein the data source is a broadcast television network and/or the internet.

24. A method as claimed in any of claims 17 to 23 wherein the television platform comprises a set-top-box or television or video-recorder, cordless or mobile telephone, media jukebox, personal digital assistant, mobile phone or combinations thereof.

25. A computer program, preferably on a data carrier or a computer readable medium, for presenting interactive television services to a user of a television system, the computer program having code or instructions for determining availability of data from a data source; capturing the available data; storing a first portion of the available data in a first area of a local memory, said first portion having a specified identity; determining whether the first data portion references a second portion of the available data depending on a value of one or more parameters stored in the local memory, the second portion also having a specified identity; storing the second portion in the first area of local memory in the event that a reference between the first and second portions is found; processing the first and second portions of data according to their identities; writing the processed data to a second area of the local memory, and using the processed data to present interactive television services to the user.

26. A television system comprising means for transmitting data streams that include interactive television service content and/or software up-dates; and a plurality of different user platforms for receiving the data streams, wherein the data streams include a plurality of different user platform identifiers for identifying which parts of the stream are for use by which platforms, at least some of the data and/or software being sharable by more than one of the platforms, and each user platform is operable to recognise the parts of the data stream that are for use by it and use those parts to cause interactive content or images to be presented on screen simultaneous with or as an alternative to television content.

27. A method for delivering interactive content to a user of a television system comprising: transmitting/broadcasting data streams that include data and/or software for implementing interactive services to a plurality of different user television platforms, wherein the data streams include a plurality of different user platform

identifiers for identifying which parts of the stream are for use by which platforms, at least some of the data and/or software being sharable by more than one of the platforms, and capturing at each user platform the parts of the data stream that are for use by it, thereby to cause interactive content or images to be presented on screen simultaneous with or as an alternative to television content.

28. An interactive television system, such as a television, set-top-box or some other consumer electronic appliance that is operable to receive and display a television service, the system having a local memory and being operable to capture/download a conditional hierarchy of data objects; use parameters that are stored in local memory to identify data objects within the hierarchy that have to be stored, and in the event that data objects are identified, cause those objects to be stored in local memory.

29. A method for providing interactive television services comprising transmitting/broadcasting a conditional hierarchy of data objects to a plurality of different user platforms, the data objects including parameters/identifiers that are usable by the user platforms to identify data objects that are to be stored for later use.